for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted to one crop.

With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The farmer's work in the gardens does not end with the "landing of the potatoes." Mangels and turnips and whatever grains he may grow must be planted, the soil prepared for them, and the growing crop weeded and tended. With the planting of the turnips, the last crop to be "put down," often as late as early June, his planting season is over.

With the return of warm weather and the drying off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is the first summer month. And by early May the bogs are dry enough to allow turf cutting to begin. The farmer must ordinarily find time between plantings to cut his year's supply of fuel and stack it into "reeks" to dry under the summer warmth. The turf cutting, though not connected with growing plants or animals, is an indispensable farm activity and takes its place among the never varying tasks of the agricultural round.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the fruits of the farmer's labor begin to appear. His first crop is cabbage which was planted in a small garden near the house at odd free times during the early spring. Cabbage is practically the only green vegetable of the small farm diet, and the old people remember "Hungry July" or July *an chabáiste* when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semistarvation in which cabbage was the only food. Today new varieties of potatoes have been introduced which mature as early as late June.

The mature potatoes mark no harvest. They are left in the ground to be turned out of the ridges with spade or plough as occasion for them demands. Not until late November will the last of them be dug up.

The first true harvest and the most important one of the year is the haymaking. The cutting of hay begins in late July or early August. It is not only the most important activity of the year, insuring a year-long supply of fodder for the farm animals and the income-producing cattle, but it is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

221 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole
● 246 family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand
241 attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by
[407 late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it,
556] and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years steam-
[407] powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

221 With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year
241 draws to a close. Through October and November turnips and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the
251 fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to
[492] the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with Novem-
221 ber cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready
231 for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

476 The commonest form of coöperation is that which in-
volves lending a boy to a "friend" whenever he is needed.
●246 In order to illustrate this form of coöperation and to give
the setting in which it takes place, it will be well to describe
the hay harvest in a country district. We choose the district
[471] of Luogh. Luogh is a mountain region of small holdings,
none of them larger than twenty-five acres, divided among
twenty-four households. There was only one large farmer
in the immediate vicinity; he worked his lands through a
herdsman and, as he had his own hired hands, did not figure
in the haymaking. All the rest of the holders had what is
called "general purpose land" by the Land Commissioners;
they had some bog, some meadow, several fields being grazed
over, and a garden of potatoes, rye, cabbage, and oats, always
less than an acre in extent. The number of cattle each had
ranged from six cows, two calves, and two bullocks held by
one holder with sixteen acres of mountain land and an
addition about three miles off in fertile bottomland (he
had got this, eight acres, several years before from the Land
[737] Commission) to none. The person having no cattle was
an old bachelor, an old-age pensioner, who lived by himself
on a farm of four acres stocked only with a few hens.

476 The hay was early, the weather favorable, and the harvest
246 began in mid-July. All the holders except two were Luogh
621 people related by complicated ties of blood and ancestral
589 association to the land and to each other. There were three
lone bachelors, a widow helped by her brother, and three
widowers helped respectively by one son, three sons and a
daughter, and two sons. The other holders were married
couples with each a son or two and perhaps a daughter
present, if they were old, and many growing children if they
[167] were not. The region was one of large-scale emigration, so
that a smaller number of young people were present than is
476 perhaps usual.
246 As the hay ripened and the weather turned fine, the fami-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

lies began to save the hay, mowing it, letting it dry, and stacking it as soon as possible, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six to eight foot haycocks. After several weeks it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. There was a great deal of interest and much comment back and forth over the progress of the various families, the probable weather, and the yield of the various meadows. The men seemed to feel a general rivalry to do their work well and quickly. About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows as quickly as possible, working from earliest morning as long as light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and with that of boys from the families who had no machines of their own. At each subsequent stage of the harvesting, a boy or young man not a member of the family whose meadow was being worked could be seen giving his labor in aid; he took his place at meals during the day.

The mowing done, the farmer then took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed the meadows belonging to his friend. In one instance a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others; in another, of two. Certain meadows were full-handed enough not to require extra hands, and in five cases no help was given, though the mowing and stacking took a very long time with them in comparison to the others, and they were obviously short-handed. Two of these were bachelors who lived alone, and two more were the "strangers." Two other families had insufficient meadow of their own and were forced to buy hay on the so-called "conacre" system (buying the hay as it stands and reaping it oneself within a stipulated time).

Here then was an example of an important agricultural operation undertaken by the local community in which provision was made (except in five or six cases) for effective coöperation over and above the usual family economy. This is not an isolated instance; in Luogh it has been the practice

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

476 from time immemorial. Old people here remembered the
● 246 day when, there being no mowing machines, scythes alone were used. Then the coöperating groups would have been larger and a more pronounced rotation of the working groups from meadow to meadow could have been observed. The same custom occurs in other places; in fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work. Given the different techniques, the same coöperation had taken place in Luogh and elsewhere at the turf cutting, the oats harvest, and the potato planting.

[164] Yet there was no monetary wage or payment involved. In the community of Luogh and surrounding townlands, the only hired labor was to be seen in the meadows of the large farmer (a cattleman with over three hundred acres),
[184] who had not coöperated with the small farmers and whose entire way of life, as well as the agriculture he practiced, was different from theirs. Except in so far as the agricultural operation the small farmers were undertaking was economic in itself, it was evident that an interpretation of the incentives for this coöperation must include other factors.

476 Driven to social rather than economic explanation, the authors were able to ascertain that in each case of this
246 coöperation there was an extended family relationship in-
602 volved. Thus Carey, who had mowed the meadows of Dennis and Seamus Molony and Brian McMahon, was second cousin to them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively of the two farmers whose meadows he had mowed. The young men or boys who had worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows with the latter's wives and children were also relatives; they were sons of the relatives for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. In no instance, of course, had a man mowed for all his relatives; it was not necessary

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

to do so. In one instance a man had mowed for a neighbor who, while not a relative, was a great boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors whom no one had helped had, of course, been able to help no one. And the two strangers who had moved into the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives "on this side." One of these was a man who had never got along with his neighbors, accused the whole townland of plotting against him, and was cordially disliked in return. The other had the help of a boy sent by a cousin in a near-by townland.

The generic term "cooring" is given to all non-monetary coöperation of this sort in many parts of Clare. The word is a direct borrowing from the Irish *comhair*, which is similarly used, originally meaning cotillage, now having the added meanings of alliance or partnership. But more interesting was the fact that the small farmers explained their cooring in terms of the "friendliness" of the place. So, we shall see, the term "friendly" is applied to the extended (and also immediate) relatives or "friends."

When asked especially why they were coöperating, the farmers' answer was that they "had right to help." In general terms they would phrase it that "you have right to help friends," or again that "country people do be very friendly; they always help one another."

Now the phrase "have right" is an expression in the brogue or English dialect spoken in Ireland (and in Clare) which, like "friendly," is a translation of a Gaelic idiom. It expresses an obligation, duty, or the traditional fitness of an act. The Gaelic word for which it is a substitute is *cóir*, and a bilingual countryman translates the Gaelic phrase *tá cóir orm* (the obligation is on me) into "I have right to." The countrymen of Clare, at least, do not ordinarily use or understand the phrase "I am right" to mean "what I have said is true." The countryman is explaining his economic acts in their traditional family setting as part of the reciproci-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

476 co-operating groups are smaller; tools are more modern and better distributed; resources are fuller.

246 476 Lending a 'boy' is the commonest form of co-operation. It goes on constantly, but can best be described in a scene of great activity, such as hay-making. I met it first there, in Luogh, the townland in which we found the 'west room'. The hay was early in Luogh in 1933. Harvest began in mid-July. The weather was just right. Warm dry days had brought the grasses to maturity, and gave promise of continuing. The families of Luogh set to work to 'save the hay': mowing it, letting it dry as it lay, and then stacking it, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six- to eight-foot hay-cocks. Later, after several weeks, it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. Now it was a question of mowing, drying and stacking it before rains caught the farmers in mid-course.

[521] There was much interest in every family's progress. The weather and the yields of the meadows drove all other subjects out of conversation. The men felt spurred to work well and quickly; there was a general rivalry in the air. The women were as eager, and brought their children to the meadow's edge, while they worked with their rakes behind the mowers.

About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows, working from earliest morning as long as

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and of boys from the families who had no machines. At each stage of the process a boy not a member of the family gave his labour; he took his place at meals during the day.

His own mowing done, the farmer paid his debt. He took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed that man's meadow. In one instance, a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others. In another, a farmer mowed for two others. Certain meadows in Luogh were full-handed enough to do without extra hands; but in five cases, though mowing and stacking took a very long time and they were obviously short of hands, no help was given. Two of these cases were bachelors, who lived alone; two more were 'strangers'.

Here was an important agricultural operation undertaken by the small local community in which provision was made for effective co-operation over and above the usual family economy. It was no isolated instance; it is immemorial practice in Luogh. In fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work.

There was no monetary payment involved in this work. In the country surrounding Luogh, the only hired labour to be seen worked the meadows of a large farmer, a cattleman with over 300 acres. He did not co-operate; in fact, his whole life was cut out of a different cloth.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XI.

HARVEST.

In this chapter we shall give an account of some harvesting customs which depend on a minimum of mechanical appliances. We begin with the hay harvest, the first of the season. The new agriculture represented by turnips and rotation grasses has, in its diffusion from England during the last two centuries, still barely touched the remoter parts of Ireland, where hay until lately had no place in the scheme of cultivation. Successive crops of corn and potatoes were taken so long as the land would yield anything, when it was allowed to grow wild grasses and weeds until the time came to break it up once ... Oat straw, which is never chaffed, to some extent took the place of hay, which, apart from a limited amount of meadow hay and " sprit," was chiefly gathered from waste places and mearings and reserved for horses and milk cows. It should be noticed that the old customs of herding, tethering and spancelling permitted the stock to graze in places where hay could not be made. Moreover natural hay, ripened but left uncut, was utilized to a great extent along the mild coasts.

Scandinavian archæologists have shown that the practice of preserving grass as hay for winter use began in that region during the cold wet phase of climate known as the Sub-Atlantic (Chapter 4). So it may have been in Ireland, too: the scythe and the iron hook have their origin in the Early Iron Age, and some of the methods of securing the crop can have changed little in two thousand years. On small farms

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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246 throughout the north of Ireland the hay is made and "saved"—how eloquent is this word of the desperate struggle with the weather!—almost entirely by hand. The traditional date for commencing the hay harvest is the famous 12th of July, and an even more celebrated day—March 17th—was the time for "closing" the hay-fields. Cut with the scythe, supplemented by the hook and by hand-pulling on steep banks or around trees and bushes, the swathes are shaken and gathered into parallel wind-rows or "coles" and then "lapped," that is folded into small muff-like heaps against the leg (Fig. 49). In lapping, the cut grass is smoothed down on both sides so that the rain will run off, while the inside is [184] left open to allow the air to pass through. The practise of lapping is found as far south as Meath and Galway but I have not seen it further south: it would be interesting to trace its exact distribution and compare it with that of other cultural traits. Even in districts well-equipped with machinery the method of lapping is retained, as an alternative to tying into sheaves, for the crops of seed-hay which are a valuable source of income on the small farms of lowland Ulster. This

Lapping Hay. Glendun, Co. Antrim

Fig. 49.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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rotation grass is referred to as upland hay to distinguish it from meadow hay, although in fact it often grows at lower levels. Sometimes at this stage the hay is hung on bushes and fences something after the Scandinavian manner.

When sufficiently dry the laps are opened and the hay piled into small cocks (ricks or lumps), and this process is repeated a number of times if the weather is bad until the stage of large hand-cocks is reached, or, if the hay is in good condition, even larger "tramp-cocks," trodden down firmly. The cocks are tied down with a hay-rope made on the spot (Fig. 50) and left "to season" for a period which may be only a week or two but which, to the stranger, seems generally an unconscionable time. In this matter the Irish

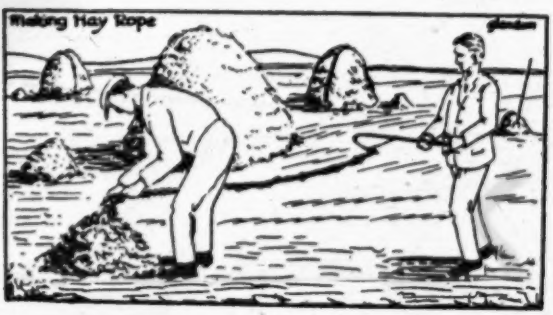

Fig. 50.

are confirmed in what the English call their lazy ways. Admittedly there are dry years when it would do no harm to the hay to stack it at once, but the Irish method is adapted to the average season, and rooted in a firmly-fixed rota of farm work. In August the turf must be carried home while the bogs are firm enough to take the carts, and in many parts the busy time of flax-pulling and retting is come. Although these alternative demands on the farmer's time are not always present, they may have helped in the past to standardize the rotation of work. Moreover, when the opportunity of carry-

ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock, which is thus " sliped " home, but on larger farms a hay-cart is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose : its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or " sweep " with its long ash teeth.

In the haggard (" hay-guard ") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which " draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. The stacks are either circular (" pikes " in Co. Antrim) or oblong (" havels ") : there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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Fig. 51.

Fig. 52.

or " swapped " between neighbouring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing. The flax is harvested in August, after the fleeting pale blue flower has gone. Prepared beforehand and lying ready to hand in bundles of 60 or so (enough for a certain number of stooks) are the lint bands of green rushes for tying the sheaves or " beets." The bands consist of two lengths of rushes, placed with the flowering ends together and tied in a reef-knot with a single movement involving a quick manipulation of thumbs and fingers (Fig. 52). The beets are stooked heads down, in which position also they are drowned or " dubbed," as soon as may be, in the " lint hole " or flax dam, where soft water has been warming up ready for the steeping. A horizontal layer of beets and a covering of bracken weighted with large stones completes the filling of the dam, and the process of retting, which takes on the average 10 or 12 days, is soon advertized by a smell of foul yet fascinating intensity. We need not follow the flax on its career from the rank pit to

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FARMYARDS AND FENCES

Throughout the lowland farming country the commonest ditch is an earthen bank faced on one side with stones and planted with quicks slipped in near the base among the stones (Fig. 36). This was the 'approved mode' of enclosing the land

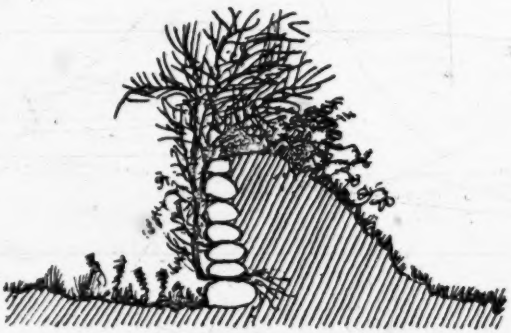

FIG. 36. The hedged ditch, cross-section.

advocated by the reformers from the late eighteenth century onwards, but it was noted that 'the planting of hedgerows was repugnant to the practice of the country' and in many districts the hedges were neglected and the livestock still had to be tethered in the fields.[1] The tradition of temporary fences died hard. 'A year's ditch passeth for a very strong fence', wrote Sir John Davies to the Earl of Salisbury in 1606. These sod fences were deliberately thrown down after harvest, and the decayed sods enriched the soil. The *Advertisements for Ireland* published in 1623 state: 'Their fields lie open and unclosed. Where wood is plentiful they hedge in all their corn with stakes and bushes and pull them down in the winter and burn them.'[2] When fixed field-divisions were adopted, the hedgeless earthen bank was preferred in many parts of the country, usually growing a luxuriant crop of brambles and gorse (whins). These were a useful source of firewood and provided both shelter and food for the livestock, the 'pounded whins' being fed to horses. The knocking stones, flat slabs or stone basins where the whins

[1] *Report on the Estates of the Drapers' Company in Ireland*, 1829.
[2] *Advertisements for Ireland* (1623), Ed. G. O'Brien (1923), 33.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

were 'melled' with a wooden maul, are sometimes to be seen in the farmyard, and there were a few water-driven 'whin-mills'. Their use is almost forgotten as is the custom of growing a field of whins to provide fodder. This was done in Co. Cavan and it is a recognized method of land utilization in the poorer parts of Brittany. A gorse hedge near the homestead is still popular as a place for drying clothes on washing day. 'Firing being scarce', wrote Gabriel Beranger of the barony of Bargy and Forth, 'they plant all their ditches with furze, which serves them for firing, and is reckoned equal in value with the produce of the land.'[1] Small farmers in Co. Down preferred wide earthen ditches because, as Binns was told: 'we have both sides of the ditch for feeding the cattle, and whins to bruise for the horses'.[2] The economy of the grass-grown ditch becomes clearer when we realize that on boulder-strewn hillsides where wide stone ditches separate the tiny fields a high proportion of the land is sterilized. Such wide earth banks often serve as footpaths where the land is wet, and in Co. Limerick I have seen cart tracks on top of them. This habit may go back to the wide balks between some of the openfield patches, which were used as access ways where the boggy fields were too soft to take a cart. Such double ditches, when faced with stones on both sides, are undoubtedly an old type of fence, for they are characteristic of many raths or Dark Age farmsteads. These 'dry fences' are common in Co. Kerry and also in north Antrim, and they occur in Brittany, and in parts of Anglesey and north Pembrokeshire. In stony country the filling of a double ditch may be of loose stones gathered from the fields, and here again we have ancient examples in the enclosing walls of small cashels which are the equivalent in thin-soiled areas of the raths of the lowlands.

What nearly all these many types of field fences have in common is their untidy appearance. Dry stone walls tend to be cyclopean, lacking the precision of those of north England or the Cotswold country. Rough glacial boulders are a poor substitute for oolite, and one recalls the comment of Sir John Russell that Irish architecture suffered because of the virtual absence of Jurassic rocks in the geological series. Rarely does

[1] Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 192.
[2] J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XII

HARVEST

THANKS to the necessity of 'winning' (seasoning) hay and corn in the fields before the crops are carried home, harvest time drags on from late summer to the edge of winter, and the word 'harvest' as we have seen is a synonym for autumn. In this pastoral Irish country the hay harvest is nowadays of vital importance in farm economy, yet I cannot find any evidence that hay played a significant part in the traditional Gaelic system of farming. It is the sickle, not the scythe, which figures in folk-lore and in place-names, and the scythe seems to be a relative newcomer in most parts of the country. It requires a stone-free sward which would be hard to seek on hill farms. The business of hay-making was, I believe, of little importance until the economic changes of the agrarian revolution and the introduction of rotation grass. In the North the date of the first hay-cutting is fixed by a celebrated but relatively new festival, the Orangeman's day on the 12th of July. After hay comes flax, which is pulled from late July to mid-August, followed by wheat and barley in the areas where they are grown, by the corn harvest in September and the potato-lifting in October. In bad years hay may still be uncut in late August, the mountain corn is green even at the end of September, and late-cut corn sometimes stays stacked in the fields up to Christmas—indeed there are records of the grain being reaped after Christmas[1]—but traditionally all harvest work was completed by All-Hallows.

In Scandinavia it has been claimed that hay-making began in pre-historic times as a result of the climatic deterioration which took place during the last millennium B.C. In Ireland with its

[1]For example in 1817. J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 25.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

246 milder winters there seems to have been no such response. Although there has been hay-making on the rich meadows of Co. Meath, for example, since medieval times, when the English openfield system was introduced, I have found no literary or archaeological evidence for it anywhere in early Ireland. Indeed Giraldus Cambrensis expressed surprise in the twelfth century that the Irish neither made hay nor built stalls [114] for cattle, and despite his untrustworthiness I believe his witness may be accepted in this instance. Hay-making would have begun on the river bottoms (callows, holms) which, being liable to floods, were not available for winter grazing: this meadow hay is today much less important than 'upland' hay, the significant term used for rotation grass. The hay-making season is nowadays a time of toil for all members of the family, but I suspect that the period from midsummer to late July was under the old order a slack season, the time for raiding and fighting, and catching the English bending in the hayfields. For the Irish it was the 'blue month', when food was scarce (July is also called 'the hungry month') and the meal bins empty. In Ulster at any rate, for reasons which may be older than King William III, July is the holiday month and the time for faction fights. Sir John Myres used to say that in the Mediterranean world, where there is little grass to make hay, the month of May was the slackest time of the summer, the favourite time for fighting instead of hay-making. In Ireland [721] as in classical Greece the winter climate made it difficult and unsportsmanlike to go to war at that season.

To judge from present practice on the tiny farms of the west of Ireland, grass was cut as required from field-banks and odd corners, a creelful at a time to give to the cow as a 'bribe' at [462] milking time, and it was woman's work. The hook used for [412] this purpose, the grass or scythe hook, is smooth-edged, unlike the saw-toothed corn sickle, and what hay was made in former times was probably cut for the most part with the hook. The livestock would be fed in winter mainly on oatstraw, and grazed [231] on the infield stubble, supplemented by the outfield grasses which had been allowed to mature while the bulk of the stock was at the summer booley-grounds. We may be sure that what little hay was saved was treated much as it is on mountainy

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

farms today. The scythed grass is shaken out by hand and spread thinly over the field. When partly dry it is gathered into windrows and lapped or coiled, that is folded against the leg over the forearm into small 'lap-cocks' resembling a lady's muff, the hole permitting the wind to pass through and the smooth rounded top allowing the rain to run off. Like all practised hand-work it is a job carried through with apparently mechanical indifference, but the old hands will take care to ensure that the laps are properly made and laid down so that they are aligned with the prevailing wind. Even on rich lowland farms the hay will be 'lapped' if it is first season's grass grown, as in Ulster, for the seed, which is a valuable export. Alternatively seed grass is tied in sheaves and 'gaited' like flax or stooked like a cereal crop (Fig. 51).

FIG. 51. Laps of hay, gaits of flax and stook of wheat, with 'hudders'.

When dry the laps are shaken open and built into small cocks or lumps which are later enlarged into hand cocks. Or if the hay is in good condition it is made, chiefly in the drier parts of the country, into larger ricks or tramp cocks which are trodden down firmly and secured with a hay-rope (Fig. 52, 10). The process of hay-making is thus, like the winning of turf (Chapter XIV), one of gradually increasing the size of the pile as the material is dried by sun and wind. The cocked hay is left standing for some weeks in the fields to season, so that it seems to the English visitor, as Arthur Young remarked, that the Irish are generally two months 'making or marring their hay'.[1] The explanation given is the necessity of avoiding overheating, but English critics say that it is the farmers who dislike getting overheated! A more charitable view is that by the

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 246.

[Text continues on p. 155]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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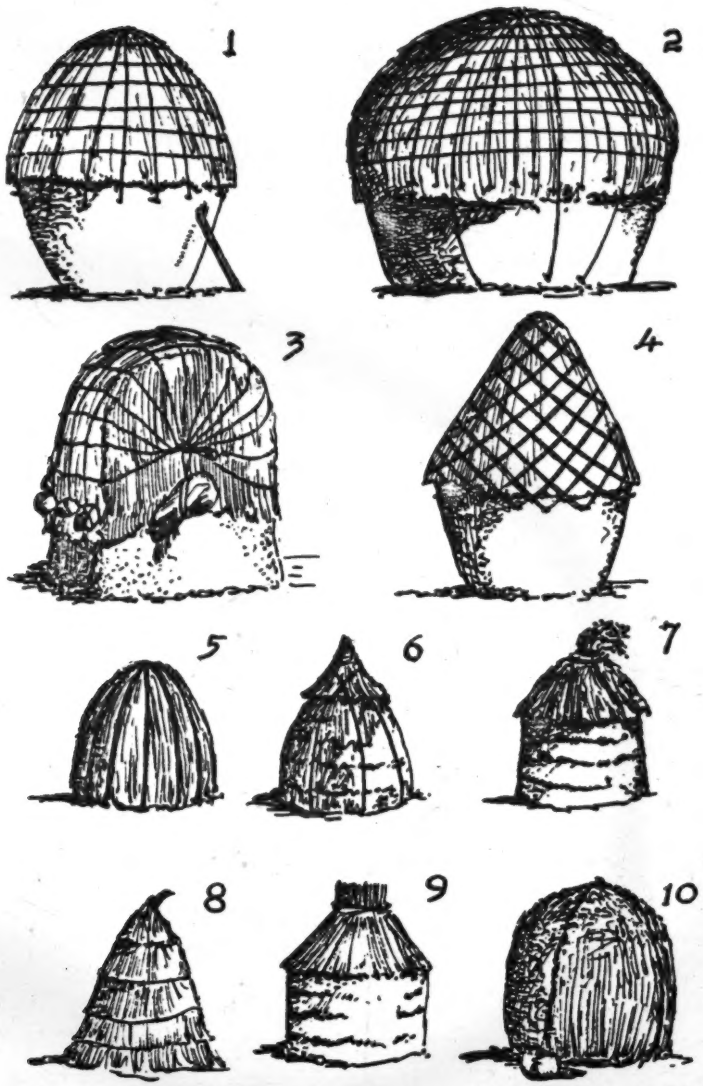

FIG. 52. Stacks and huts roped in many patterns. (1) Cavan (flax). (2) Cork (hay). (3) Mayo (hay). (4) Antrim (oats). (5) Donegal (hay). (6) Donegal (oats). (7) Down (oats). (8) Down (seed hay). (9) Cavan (oats). (10) Down (tramp-cock of hay).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

time large-scale hay-making developed it had to fit into a fixed rota of farm work which kept men busy in late July and August at flax-pulling and turf-carrying, so that the cocked hay had to wait. Today the baling machine is speeding up the process, but the bales, whether from the need of seasoning or from force of habit, are left piled in angular cocks scattered over the hayfield.

Carried at last to the haggard on rick-shifters or slipes—formerly on slide-cars or the backs of men and ponies—the hay is built into small circular stacks (pikes). As a protection against wind and rain they are thatched with rushes forthwith and roped (Fig. 52). Since the stacks are thatched before they have had time to settle, the pegged or scolloped thatch found in England is not used. Not only do ropes hold the thatch more securely but it is a simple matter to tighten them as the stack sinks. In the simplest form of roping, hanging stones are attached to the rope ends so that the adjustment is automatic. But where the roof of the stack is not rounded but conical a straw-rope is wrapped round in a spiral which can later be tightened by vertical ropes pegged into the lower part of the stack. One sees this spiral roping also in parts of western Britain. Several other patterns of roping are found, some making a complete network; and the shape of the stack also shows many regional variations (Fig. 52). The size and shape depend not only on local custom but to some extent on the weather and the condition of the hay. Small rounded stacks are most usual, for they are wind-resistant. They are characteristic too of much of Highland Britain from Caithness to Cornwall.

The scythe has not entirely given way to the mowing machine on small farms in whose tiny fields it would anyhow be difficult to turn a machine. The Irish scythesmen, though not so well known as the spalpeens or reapers, had their brief day in the English harvest-fields, and those who remember working 'across the water' in the nineteenth century tell of great feats of piecework. I was told of one heroic figure who could scythe seven acres in the day, 'and four lifters wouldn't lift after him'. Henry Stephens, in 1855, reckoned that the English labourer would scythe four acres of oats or barley in a ten-hour working day.[1]

[1]Quoted in E. C. Curwen, *Plough and Pasture* (1946), 98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

246 412 The Irish prefer the long-handled scythe. The sned, about five-and-a-half feet long, has the lower handgrip offset, and a pointed iron spike is sometimes driven into the end of the sned to anchor it safely when honing (Fig. 58). A test of a well-

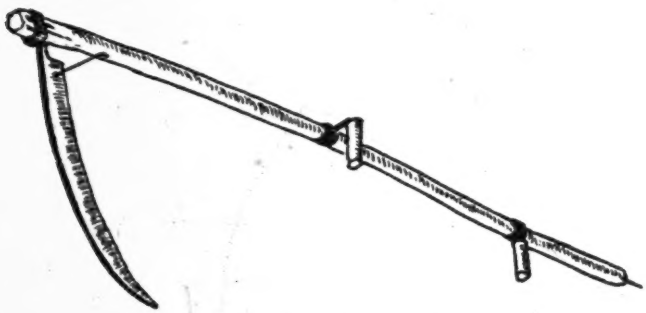

FIG. 58. Long-handled scythe, Donegal.

sharpened scythe is that it should 'cut wool moving downstream', and there was a special charm used in sharpening. The sanded scytheboard (strickle) has now given way to the artifi-
[133] cial stone, though hones of natural stone, including the fossilized wood of Lough Neagh, are used locally. A smith-made scythe-blade is highly prized and long after its legitimate life has ended lengths of it will be utilized for choppers and turnip knives. For full efficiency one must be measured for the fitting and hanging of a scythe. The lower handle should be at arm's length from the bottom of the sned, the upper one distant from the top by the length from elbow to finger-tips. The two handles should also be a cubit apart. The angle of the blade is determined by swinging the left leg and adjusting the blade until its point comes within a nicely determined distance of it when the sned is held upright against the right leg. The scythe cradle, for gathering the swathe as it is cut, is rarely met with
[184] in Ulster, save for makeshift devices such as a bit of sacking fitted against the 'grass-nail' which joins sned and blade in the angle where they meet. In the south and south-east of the country, where the scythe is an old introduction, quite elaborate cradles both of wood and of finely-wrought iron are to be seen.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 12

501

1. Curraghs, the Aran Islands.

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492
342

2. Dragging home the hay in the west of Ireland.

[Facing p. 161]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

"Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted. 246 221

The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a "reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder. 246 [293] [461] [343]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

342
343
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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent 434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts 437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils [311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and 178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter